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with good pearls, in abundance. Therefore, it is not possible to say for how many more years the pearl fishery operation can be expected to be continued.

SRI S. NAGARAJA MONIGAR: May I know whether the operations are carried out by the Government direct or through any agency? Also, will the Government consider the necessity of forming a Board for it?

THE HON. SRIMATHI LOURDHAMMAL SIMON: The Government are conducting pearl fisheries and there is no other agency.

Pearl and chanks

MR. SPEAKER: Questions Nos. 792 and 793 may be taken up together.

* 792 *Q.*—SRI T. S. RAMASWAMI (on behalf of SRI K. SATTANATHA KARAYAR): Will the Hon. the Minister for Local Administration be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether any concession is shown to Bengal Purchasers in their purchase of pearl and chanks; and

(*b*) if so, the basis and the manner of concession shown?

THE HON. SRIMATHI LOURDHAMMAL SIMON: (*a*) & (*b*) The Government of West Bengal purchase only chanks for distribution to their artisans. With the main idea to help the artisans who are mostly repatriates from East Pakistan and also to create a demand for our chanks in West Bengal, this Government supplied chanks by direct negotiations to the Government of West Bengal. Only on two occasions, this Government supplied chanks at a price less than the price at which chanks were purchased by the private merchants.

793 *Q.*—SRI T. S. RAMASWAMI (on behalf of SRI K. SATTANATHA KARAYALAR): Will the Hon. the Minister for Local Administration be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether any representation was made by our Government to the Central Government to stop the import of chanks from Ceylon; and

(*b*) if so, the results thereof?

THE HON. SRIMATHI LOURDHAMMAL SIMON: (*a*) Yes, Sir.

(*b*) The reply from the Government of India is still awaited.

SRI S. NAGARAJA MONIGAR: Sir, if cheap quality pearls and chanks are available, will concessions be shown to our own people of the land, namely, gypsy tribes who are called 'Kuruvikkarargal' etc., so that we can elevate their lives?

THE HON. SRIMATHI LOURDHAMMAL SIMON: I should like to say that chanks and pearls are of different nature. We have got different contracts for these. Prices also are quite different. In the case of pearls, it is only speculation as to what they get in the system. As for chanks, they have to be measured according to their size and quality. They are sold in different places at different rates. At some places chanks are of better value and better quality. At some coastal places, they are not of such good quality. Chanks are